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Nine Gold Medals

Summary

The poem “Nine Gold Medals” by David Roth describes a special race held during the Special Olympics, where athletes from different countries gather to compete for medals. They have trained hard for many months, and the atmosphere is full of excitement as the final race—the hundred-yard dash—is about to begin.

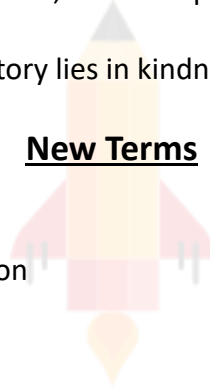
As the race starts, all the runners sprint forward with determination. However, one of the smallest athletes stumbles, falls, and cries out in pain and disappointment. Instead of continuing the race to win, the other eight runners stop, turn back, and help the fallen boy get up. Showing true sportsmanship and compassion, they all join hands and walk together to the finish line.

In the end, all nine athletes are awarded gold medals. The spectators give them a standing ovation, recognizing that their act of kindness, unity, and humanity is far more valuable than winning a race. The poem highlights that true victory lies not in competition, but in empathy, cooperation, and caring for others.

- **Message:** The poem teaches that true victory lies in kindness and helping others, not just winning.

New Terms

- **Spectators** – People who watch an event
- **Resolved** – Determined and firm in decision
- **Poised** – Ready and prepared
- **Stumbled** – Tripped or lost balance
- **Staggered** – Walked unsteadily
- **Anguish** – Great pain or suffering
- **Dashed** – Destroyed or broken suddenly
- **Pulled up** – Stopped suddenly
- **Ovations** – Great applause or cheering
- **Beaming** – Smiling brightly



Reflect and Respond

I. Work in pairs. Discuss the difference between Olympics, Special Olympics, and Paralympics.

Ans. Difference between Olympics, Special Olympics, and Paralympics:

- **Olympics** – An international sports event for top athletes from all over the world.
- **Paralympics** – An international sports event for athletes with physical disabilities.
- **Special Olympics** – Sports events for people with intellectual disabilities, focusing on participation, confidence, and joy.

II. Work in pairs to match the words 'empathy', 'sympathy', and 'compassion' to the sentences given in the table below.

<i>I am so sorry for what is happening to you. It is sad, do you want something to eat?</i>	<i>I can imagine how you feel. I understand that you are upset and why.</i>	<i>I understand why you feel terribly low. I will spend some time with you, so that you don't feel lonely.</i>
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Ans. Match the words:

- "I am so sorry for what is happening to you. It is sad, do you want something to eat?" → Sympathy
- "I can imagine how you feel. I understand that you are upset and why." → Empathy
- "I understand why you feel terribly low. I will spend some time with you, so that you don't feel lonely." → Compassion

III. Work in pairs. List the words you associate with 'empathy'. Share your responses with your classmates and teacher.

Ans. Words associated with 'Empathy':

- Understanding Care Kindness Listening
- Support Respect Sensitivity Sharing feelings
- Concern Helpfulness

I. Work in pairs. Match the words and phrases in Column 1 with their meanings in Column 2. You may

Check Your Understanding

read the poem again and infer the contextual meaning. Check your answers with the teacher

Column 1	Column 2
1. dashed in the dirt	(i) walk or move with difficulty
2. stumbled	(ii) destroyed
3. staggered	(iii) a hard black substance used to make roads and paths
4. anguish	(iv) step awkwardly, lose balance and almost fall
5. asphalt	(v) extreme pain or suffering

1. dashed in the dirt → (ii) destroyed
2. stumbled → (iv) step awkwardly, lose balance and almost fall
3. staggered → (i) walk or move with difficulty
4. anguish → (v) extreme pain or suffering
5. asphalt → (iii) a hard black substance used to make roads and paths

II. Identify the gist of each stanza. Write the number of the stanza in the boxes given.

1. Spectators cheered participants of different events and waited enthusiastically for the final event to start. → Stanza 2
2. All runners dashed ahead as soon as they heard the gun shot; suddenly, one of the athletes tripped and fell on the ground. → Stanza 4
3. The race finished with nine athletes holding hands and winning the well-deserved gold medals; their smiles, and spectators standing up to applaud, conveyed everything. → Stanza 8
4. Participants got ready at the starting line and nine determined athletes waited for the sound of the gun. → Stanza 3
5. Athletes from various parts of the country had gone through months of training; had big dreams of winning a medal. → Stanza 1
6. The eight athletes stopped to help the young fallen athlete stand up, forgetting that they were competing. → Stanza 6
7. Nine athletes held the banner and walked hand in hand; this gesture represented the ethos of Special Olympics. → Stanza 7
8. The young athlete felt his dreams were shattered and cried in pain and disappointment, but something unique happened. → Stanza 5

III. Let us appreciate the poem.

1. Two examples of alliteration from the poem are (i) _____ and (ii) _____.

Ans.

- (i) "sound of the gun"
- (ii) "beaming faces"

2. Give three examples of visual imagery from the poem.

Ans.

- (i) "fell to the asphalt instead"
- (ii) "nine runners joined hands"
- (iii) "finish line holding hands still"

3. Give an example of auditory imagery from the poem.

Ans.

- (i) "the pistol exploded"

4. How does the use of imagery make the poem more appealing?

Ans. Imagery helps the reader see and feel the events clearly, making the poem more lively, emotional, and interesting.

5. How does the poet's tone change from the beginning to the end of the poem?

Ans. The tone changes from serious and competitive at the beginning to emotional, inspiring, and heartwarming at the end.

6. What is the overall mood created by the poem?

Ans. The overall mood of the poem is inspiring, emotional, and heartwarming, as it highlights kindness, unity, and true sportsmanship.

7. What is the message being conveyed by the poem?

Ans. The poem conveys that true success lies in kindness, empathy, and helping others, rather than just winning a competition.

Critical Reflection

I. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

1. The eight other runners pulled up on their heels
The ones who had trained for so long to compete
One by one they all turned round and went back to help him and brought the young boy to his feet.

(i) Select the correct option to complete the sentence.

- The phrase 'pulled up on their heels' means that the runners _____.
- A. moved aside
- B. stopped running
- C. tried to run faster
- D. jumped ahead

Ans. B. stopped running

(ii) Mention one character trait common to all the eight other runners.

Ans. One character trait: Kindness / Compassion / Empathy

(iii) What is the tone of the poet in these lines?

Ans. The tone of the poet in these lines is emotional and appreciative, as he admires the kindness and compassion shown by the runners.

(iv) How might the young athlete have felt on being helped by the others?

Ans. The young athlete might have felt grateful, relieved, and encouraged, as the others showed kindness and support.

(v) Would you consider this incident as a turning point in the poem? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Ans. Yes, this incident is a turning point in the poem because the race changes from a competition to an act of kindness and unity, highlighting true sportsmanship.

2. That's how the race ended, with nine gold medals

They came to the finish line holding hands still

And a standing ovation and nine beaming faces

Said more than these words ever will.

(i) How did the nine contestants feel when they reached the finishing line together?

Ans. The nine contestants felt happy, proud, and united when they reached the finishing line together.

(ii) Why do you think all the nine contestants were given gold medals?

Ans. All nine contestants were given gold medals because they showed true sportsmanship, kindness, and unity by helping one another instead of competing to win individually.

(iii) Complete the sentence appropriately.

- The holding of hands signifies a feeling of _____.

Ans. unity and togetherness

(iv) Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.

- The spectators giving a 'standing ovation' indicates that they were _____.
- A. amazed
- B. speechless
- C. distracted
- D. thoughtful

Ans. A. amazed

(v) Explain the last line of the extract.

Ans. The smiles and applause express emotions of joy and respect better than words, showing that their act was truly meaningful.

II. Answer the following questions.

1. Describe how the setting established in the first two stanzas of the poem create a vivid atmosphere for the events that follow.

Ans. The first two stanzas create a lively and exciting atmosphere by describing athletes who have trained for months and are eager to win medals, along with spectators gathered to cheer them on. This builds a sense of anticipation and energy for the final race, making the events that follow more impactful and meaningful.

2. How do you think the youngest athlete might have felt when he fell?

Ans. The youngest athlete might have felt shocked, hurt, and embarrassed when he fell. He was likely disappointed and afraid of losing, which made him cry in pain and frustration.

3. Why were the athletes eager to begin the race?

Ans. The athletes were eager to begin the race because they had trained hard for many weeks and months and were excited to win medals and achieve their dreams.

4. What does the transformation of the hundred-yard dash to a walk symbolise?

Ans. The transformation of the hundred-yard dash into a walk symbolises a shift from intense competition to compassion and cooperation. Instead of focusing on winning, the athletes choose to support one another, showing that human values like kindness, empathy, and unity are more important than victory.

5. How might the poem be different if the focus was solely on individual achievement rather than collective support?

Ans. If the poem focused only on individual achievement, it would become a simple story about winning and competition. It would lose its powerful message of kindness, unity, and helping others, making it less inspiring and meaningful.

6. How does the poet's use of language and tone enhance the reader's engagement with the poem?

Ans. The poet uses simple and clear language along with a tone that shifts from excitement to emotion and inspiration, which keeps the reader interested. This change in tone helps the reader feel the athletes' struggle and kindness, making the poem more engaging and impactful.

7. What might be the poet's purpose of writing this poem?

Ans. The poet's purpose is to teach the value of kindness, unity, and sportsmanship. The poem shows that helping others is more important than winning, making it truly inspiring.

Vocabulary in Context

I. The phrase 'standing ovation' is an example of an adjective–noun collocation. Identify two other similar examples from the poem.

Collocation is a pair or group of words that habitually appear together.

Ans. 1. final event 2. young boy

- II. Complete the table given below by writing four nouns in Column 2 that collocate with the adjectives in Column 1. One example has been done for you. You may take the help of a dictionary.

Column 1	Column 2
1. big	disappointment, failure, surprise, decision
2. heavy	
3. strong	
4. large	
5. great	

Ans.

Column 1	Column 2 (Examples)
1. big	– disappointment, failure, surprise, decision
2. heavy	– rain, bag, load, traffic
3. strong	– wind, feeling, support, belief
4. large	– crowd, number, area, amount
5. great	– effort, success, joy, achievement

- III. Choose the correct adjectives from those given in the box for the underlined words given in the sentences below. Ensure you do not use the same adjective twice.

positive significant youngest
noisy loud

- The littlest athlete was moving at a steady pace.
- The eight athletes had a smiling attitude.
- When the athlete fell, he gave a huge cry of pain.
- The spectators saw a terrible difference in the athletes who had only come to compete.
- The gaudy crowd cheered the runners enthusiastically.

Ans. Choose the correct adjectives:

- The littlest athlete → youngest
- smiling attitude → positive
- huge cry of pain → loud
- terrible difference → significant
- gaudy crowd → noisy

Listen and Respond

- I. You will listen to a radio-talk about Patrick Gomes, a coach of special athletes. As you listen, write true or false for the statements given. (Transcript for teacher on page 268)
- Patrick Gomes began his career in sports with track events. - False
 - Patrick Gomes has been coaching special athletes for 10 years. - True
 - Patrick Gomes does all the household work himself. - False

II. You will listen to the radio-talk once again. As you listen, choose the correct option for each question.

1. When the speaker uses the phrase 'push your boundaries', he wants listeners to _____.

- (i) challenge themselves
- (ii) meet new people
- (iii) be open-minded

Ans. (i) challenge themselves

2. Patrick Gomes is a _____ at present.

- (i) special athlete
- (ii) coach of special athletes
- (iii) value education teacher

Ans. (ii) coach of special athletes

3. Special Olympic Games held at Connecticut was a _____ for Patrick Gomes.

- (i) motivational year
- (ii) turning point
- (iii) gradual change

Ans. (ii) turning point

4. As a special athlete, Patrick Gomes mostly participated in _____.

- (i) track events
- (ii) jogging
- (iii) football

Ans. (i) track events

5. Patrick Gomes believes that sports is essential because it encourages _____ along with fitness.

- (i) a positive outlook
- (ii) a peaceful mind
- (iii) an active life

Ans. (i) a positive outlook

Speaking Activity

I. Work in pairs. Take turns to express your points of view regarding Special Olympics.

Use the key points given below to develop the conversation.

Key points:

- Importance of Special Olympics (promotes inclusion)
- Impact of Special Olympics on sportspersons with special abilities
- How to create awareness regarding Special Olympics

Use the sentence starters given in the table below when you speak.

Asking someone for a point of view	Expressing a point of view
† What is your opinion on...?	† Personally, I believe that...
† How do you feel about...?	† I hold the opinion that...
† In your view, is...?	† It's my belief that...
† What is your take on...?	† I have a strong feeling that...
† Do you think that...?	† From my perspective...

Ans. Here is a sample pair conversation using the given points and sentence starters:

- Student A: What is your opinion on Special Olympics?
- Student B: Personally, I believe that Special Olympics are very important because they promote inclusion and equality.
- Student A: How do you feel about its impact on sportspersons with special abilities?
- Student B: From my perspective, it boosts their confidence and gives them a platform to showcase their talent.
- Student A: In your view, is it necessary to spread awareness about Special Olympics?
- Student B: I hold the opinion that it is very necessary because many people are still unaware of it.
- Student A: What is your take on how we can create awareness?
- Student B: I have a strong feeling that we can use social media, school events, and campaigns to spread awareness.

Writing Task

I. **Work in pairs to write three creative slogans on Special Olympics.**

One example of a slogan on Special Olympics has been given below.

Special Olympics: Igniting a Universe of Potential

Present your slogans in a creative manner and share with your classmates and teacher.

Special Olympics: Igniting a Universe of Potential

Steps to write a slogan

- † Understand the theme on which you want to write a slogan.
- † Brainstorm ideas and use them to create the slogan.
- † Keep it brief and simple.
- † It should not be more than eight to ten words.
- † Make the slogan catchy.

Now, create a poster based on the inspiration you have drawn from the poem. Present your poster to the class and display it on the classroom board.

Steps to design a poster

- † Include all vital information.
- † Write down the ideas.
- † Remember to place the slogan you created.
- † Use top, bottom, and sides of the poster for other important information.
- † Include some illustrations, a call for action, if needed.
- † Colour and decorate your poster.
- † Present your poster as a box item.

Ans. Three Creative Slogans on Special Olympics

- “Different abilities, same dreams, one victory.”
- “Play with heart, win with courage.”
- “Inclusion in sports, celebration of every ability.”



One Point Learning